DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 154 758 HE 010 089

AUTHOR Keith, Nathan R.
TITLE Credit Hour Completions at GSU, January 1975 - December 1975. Research and Evaluation Report 12-76.
INSTITUTION Governors State Univ., Park Forest South, Ill.
PUB DATE Aug 76
NOTE 16p.
AVAILABLE FROM Governors State University, Park Forest South, Illinois 60466

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Failure; *Autoinstructional Methods; *College Instruction; College Students; *Conventional Instruction; Failure Factors; Higher Education; *Independent Study; Institutional Research; Persistence; Research Projects; Success Factors; *Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the completion rates in the three primary instructional modes at the university: (1) regularly scheduled classroom modules; (2) self-instructional modules; and (3) independent study. It appears that there is too wide a divergence in the completion rates among these instructional modes, but there is no solid information to explain the differences. It seems reasonable to assume that not all students do well in all the modes, and matching student abilities with the most suitable instructional mode is advised. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED154758

Research Reports

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Nathan Keith
Governors State Univ
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND THE ERIC SYSTEM CONTRACTORS."

CREDIT HOUR COMPLETIONS AT GSU
JANUARY 1975 - DECEMBER 1975

RESEARCH & EVALUATION
REPORT #12-76

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

HE 010 089

Research & Innovation

Governors State University Park Forest South, Illinois 60466

Abstract

Credit Hour Completions at GSU
January 1975 - December 1975

Research & Evaluation
Report #12-76

Introduction

With competency-based instructional programs and curricula and an associated nongraded, self-paced system of learning, it seems imperative that the awarding of credit be evaluated so as to maintain the integrity of the instructional program at GSU. In the past, a few studies have been conducted at GSU to measure the completion rates in modules (R&E Report #6-72, R&E Report #14-74, R&E Report #6-76). These studies relate to several areas of instruction at GSU but cannot be considered comprehensive in their scope. They represent several measures needed to aid in the evaluation of the instructional program of the institution.

This study focuses on the completion rates in the three primary instructional modes in operation at GSU. The three primary areas to be considered are regularly scheduled classroom modules, self-instructional modules, and independent study. If differences exist in the completion rates in these instructional modes, there ought to be logical explanations for these variations.

Results

Nearly three-fourths (73.2%) of all credits registered for in regularly meeting modules in 1975 were completed by May of 1976 (one trimester after the end of the Fall, 1976 trimester). This figure is essentially the same as that of the 1972 Research and Evaluation study on completion rates that indicated a 75 percent completion rate. The completion rate did vary considerably among colleges. The college with the smallest enrollment, the College of Cultural Studies, had the lowest completion rate (64.5%) in regularly scheduled modules. The largest college, the College of Human Learning and Development, had the highest completion rate (80.1%) in regularly scheduled modules.

Slightly less than two-thirds (63.5%) of the enrolled credit hours in self-instructional modules had been completed when the data for this study was completed. Completion rates in SIMs ranged from a low of 47.7 percent in Business and Public Service to a high of 73.2 percent in Human Learning and Development. The completion rate in SIMs for all colleges is 9.7 percent below that of regularly scheduled modules. This appears to be a significant difference and should be further investigated. In particular, one college (BPS) has a completion rate of 47.7 percent and offers the greatest number of SIMs. This college should access this figure and determine a strategy for dealing with this figure. If less than 50 percent of students enrolled in a class can be expected to complete the class, it seems that the half that does not complete should be channeled into other types of modules.

In general, a student registering for credit in independent study has about a 50:50 chance of receiving the credit. Only slightly more than half (54.8%) of the students enrolled for independent study in 1975 completed their work and received credit by the time of this study. Completion rates in independent study in the colleges ranged from a low of 39.5 percent in Environmental and Applied Sciences to a high of 62.3 percent in Human Learning and Development. Since approximately 12 percent of the total credits in 1975 were independent study, attention should be focused on encouraging students to seriously pursue their independent study projects. The questions that have not yet been answered at GSU are: (1) Is the typical GSU student willing and able to pursue subject matter independently, (2) will this effort result in significant educational growth on the part of the student, and (3) does the amount or kind of counseling offered during independent study differ among colleges?

The completion rates in other types of modules, taken as a group, seem to be about where one would expect them to be (nearly 70%).

After reviewing statistics on completion rates for regularly scheduled modules, self-instructional modules, and independent study it appears that there is too wide a divergence in the completion rate among these instructional modes. There are many possible explanations but no solid information to say exactly why these differences occur. However, it seems reasonable to assume that not all students can do equally well in these three types of instructional modes. If the institution can identify which type of instructional mode in which students individually perform best, then students can be advised more effectively. The incompletion of modules costs the student and the university both financially and attitudinally. Sensitivity to the individual nature of incoming skills of each student seems to be a needed element to channel students into productive degree tracks.

Enrolling students in modules in which their probability of success is highest will obviously improve the completion rate in modules. Of course, a high completion rate by itself says nothing, but, if the student is more successful and at the same time achieves required competencies, then, the student and the university have gained from an educational experience.

CREDIT HOUR COMPLETIONS AT GSU

JANUARY 1975 - DECEMBER 1975

Research & Evaluation Report #12-76
Nathan R. Keith
Governors State University
Park Forest South, Illinois 60466
August, 1976

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Methodology	2
Results	2
Regularly Scheduled Modules	2
Self-Instructional Modules	4
Independent Study	6
Other Modules	7
Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations	8

TABLES

Table 1 - Completed Credits in Regularly Scheduled Modules - 1975	3
Table 2 - Completed Credits in Self-Instructional Modules - 1975	5
Table 3 - Completed Credits in Independent Study - 1975	7
Table 4 - Completion Rates in "Other" Types of Modules - 1975 (Cooperative Education, Field Placement, Practicum)	8

CREDIT HOUR COMPLETIONS AT GSU
January 1975 - December 1975

Research and Evaluation
Report #12-76

Introduction

With competency-based instructional programs and curricula and an associated nongraded, self-paced system of learning, it seems imperative that the awarding of credit be evaluated so as to maintain the integrity of the instructional program at GSU. In the past, a few studies have been conducted at GSU to measure the completion rates in modules (R&E Report #6-72, R&E Report #14-74, R&E Report #6-76). These studies relate to several areas of instruction at GSU but cannot be considered comprehensive in their scope. They represent several measures needed to aid in the evaluation of the instructional program of the institution.

This study focuses on the completion rates in the three primary instructional modes in operation at GSU. The three primary areas to be considered are regularly scheduled classroom modules, self-instructional modules, and independent study. If differences exist in the completion rates in these instructional modes, there ought to be logical explanations for these variations.

The primary questions that must be raised by a study of this nature are: Should completion rates in regularly scheduled modules be the same among GSU colleges? Should completion rates in self-instructional modules be the same among GSU colleges and the same as regular modules? Should the completion rates in independent study be the same among the GSU colleges and the same as regularly scheduled modules and self-instructional modules? Are the completion rates

too high or perhaps too low? Does the difference in completion rates among colleges reflect differences in collegial philosophies, programs, quality of instruction, or student characteristics? Is completion rate related to class size?

Methodology

The data used in this study were obtained from a faculty load analysis generated from the current student information system. Data for all twelve months of the 1975 calendar year were obtained in May, 1976 (one trimester after the end of 1975) for all instruction in this year. The completion rates were then determined by dividing total credits awarded by total credits enrolled. This was done for regular modules, self-instructional modules, independent study, and other modules (practicums, field placements, cooperative education). Data were excluded that could not be assigned to particular instructors.

Results

The results are presented in four sections. Section one discusses each of the following: (1) regularly scheduled modules, (2) self-instructional modules, (3) independent study, and (4) other (including practicums, field placement, and cooperative education).

Regularly Scheduled Modules

The majority of the modules offered at GSU are offered in a somewhat traditional mode of instruction with classes meeting on a regularly scheduled basis. Table 1 indicates that for 1,137 regularly scheduled modules offered

in 1975 (Jan.-Dec.), 73.2 percent of the credits enrolled for were awarded for credit. The completion rate for regularly scheduled modules varied among colleges with 67.9 percent completing in Business and Public Service, 64.5 percent completing in Cultural Studies, 75.9 percent completing in Environmental and Applied Sciences, and 80.1 percent completing in Human Learning and Development. This represents a range in completion rates across colleges of 15.6 percent.

Although comparable statistics are not available, prior studies at GSU are used here to give a general comparison of completion rates prior to the period of this study. Research and Evaluation Report #6-72 showed a university-wide rate of completion of enrolled units as being 75 percent. The rate varied by college as follows: BPS - 72 percent; CS - 66 percent; EAS - 69 percent; HLD - 85 percent. These figures give an indication that completion rates in modules for 1971-72 are not much different from 1975.

Table 1

Completed Credits in Regularly Scheduled Modules - 1975

College	No. of Modules	Headcount Enrollment	Credits Enrolled	Credits Completed	Credit Hr. Completion Rate
Business and Public Service	290	7,317	16,583	11,260	67.9
Cultural Studies	296	6,142	13,218	8,532	64.5
Environmental and Applied Sciences	222	4,400	10,218	7,754	75.9
Human Learning and Development	329	9,934	24,965	19,994	80.1
Total University	1,137	27,793	64,984	47,540	73.2

A follow-up study (R&E Report #6-76) of the 1972 entering junior class indicated that those students completed 80 percent of the modules for which they were enrolled and the remaining 20 percent were either dropped or incomplete.

Self-Instructional Modules

Nearly two-thirds (63.5%) of credits enrolled for in self-instructional modules were completed for those SIMs offered in 1975. The 58 SIMs offered in Business and Public Service had an average of 47.7 percent of their enrolled credits completed by May of 1976. Eight (8) SIMs offered in Cultural Studies had an average completion rate of 61.7 percent. Slightly more than half (53.6%) of the units enrolled for in 7 SIMs in Environmental and Applied Sciences were completed by May of 1976. The highest completion rate in SIMs among the colleges is in Human Learning and Development where 73.2 percent of the units enrolled for in 36 SIMs were completed.

Although exact statistics are not yet available, it appears that the college with the highest completion rate in SIMs (HLD - 73.2%) also has the greatest number of SIMs developed in coordination with the Instructional Communication Center while the college with the lowest completion rate (BPS - 47.7%) has few modules developed in coordination with the Instructional Communication Center. These figures infer a correlation between ICC development and completion rates in modules but do not say that high completion rates are caused by ICC being involved in more SIMs.

There are many explanations that can attempt to explain the lower completion rate in self-instructional modules than in regular modules. Certainly

it should be considered that the student in a self-instructional module is totally responsible for completion although the student guide may give suggested completion times. It is also possible that the way SIMs are organized makes it harder for the student to complete than regular modules.

The completion rate for SIMs is lower in each of the colleges than for regularly scheduled modules. At the same time, the average enrollment per SIM is less in three of the four colleges (BPS, CS, EAS) than in regularly scheduled modules. No definite conclusions can be made from these data; however, it appears that students are finding it more difficult to complete SIMs than regular modules. Since, across the university, the completion rate in SIMs is approximately 10 percent below that of regularly meeting modules, the students not completing SIMs and the SIM coordinators should be queried to try to determine if a special problem exists.

Table 2

Completed Credits in Self-Instructional Modules - 1975

College	No. of Modules	Headcount Enrollment	Credit Hrs. Enrolled (CHE)	Credit Hrs. Completed (CHC)	Credit Hr. Completion Rate (CHC/CHE)
Business and Public Service	58	1,301	2,786	1,329	47.7
Cultural Studies	8	104	183	113	61.7
Environmental and Applied Sciences	7	138	330	177	53.6
Human Learning and Development	36	1,830	4,889	3,580	73.2
Total University	109	3,373	8,188	5,199	63.5

Independent Study

Slightly more than half (54.8%) of independent study credit hours enrolled for in 1975 had been completed by May of 1976. Data presented in Table 3 indicates that the completion rate for independent study credit hours varied considerably among colleges ranging from 39.5 percent in Environmental and Applied Sciences to 62.3 percent in human Learning and Development. This represents a difference of 22.8 percent in completion rates between the two colleges. In Business and Public Service, 52.9 percent of independent study credits were completed and 51.1 percent was completed in Cultural Studies.

Compared to the instructional modes already discussed (regularly scheduled modules and self-instructional modules), the completion rate in independent study modules is significantly lower. The overall completion rate in independent study (total university-1975) of 54.8 percent is 8.7 percent lower than the completion rate (63.5%) in self-instructional modules and 18.4 percent lower than the completion rate (73.2%) in regularly meeting modules.

Completion rate data by itself does not explain the difference in completion rates for the various instructional modes. However, the wide range in completion rates across the three modes mentioned above needs to be addressed. While nearly 12 percent of the total credits in 1975 were for independent study, this method of instructional delivery had the lowest success rate in terms of units completed. Only slightly more than half of the enrolled credits (students) were completed, thereby indicating that nearly one-half of the students were not able to come to closure with an independent study mode of study.

It can be inferred that all students are not equally capable of completing an independent study module. Individual difficulties associated with successfully

completing independent study should be assessed on an individual basis so that students can gain the necessary skills to pursue study on an independent basis.

Table 3

Completed Credits in Independent Study - 1975

College	Headcount Enrollment	Credits Enrolled	Credits Completed	Credit Hr. Completion Rate
Business and Public Service	904	1,918	1,014	52.9
Cultural Studies	880	2,359	1,206	51.1
Environmental and Applied Sciences	913	1,607	635	39.5
Human Learning and Development	1,904	4,920	3,066	62.3
Total University	4,601	10,804	5,921	54.8

Other Modules

For the purposes of this report, a separate category called "Other" which includes practicums, field placement, and cooperative education is presented together, separate from the previous three instructional modes. Table 4 presents data indicating that the completion rate for these modules for the total university was 68.1 percent in 1975. There was a range of 30.2 percent in completion rates among the colleges. The highest completion rate for credits in this category was accomplished in Human Learning and Development (73.1%) while the lowest completion was in Cultural Studies (33.3%). The completion rate was 72.8 percent in Business and Public Service and 46.4 percent in Environmental and Applied Sciences for Other modules.

Since the "Other" category is made up of several instructional strategies that account for only 7 percent of all credits, the completion rates of each individual category indicated has not been computed. However, the overall completion rate of 68.1 percent does not seem to be out of line from what would be expected.

Table 4

Completion Rates in "Other" Types of Modules - 1975
(Cooperative Education, Field Placement, Practicum)

College	Headcount Enrollment	Credits Enrolled	Credits Completed	Credit Hr. Completion Rate
Business and Public Service	303	784	571	72.8
Cultural Studies	126	396	132	33.3
Environmental and Applied Sciences	161	392	275	46.4
Human Learning and Development	2,133	4,582	3,349	73.1
Total University	2,723	6,354	4,327	68.1

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Nearly three-fourths (73.2%) of all credits registered for in regularly meeting modules in 1975 were completed by May of 1976 (one trimester after the end of the Fall, 1976 trimester). This figure is essentially the same as that of the 1972 Research and Evaluation study on completion rates that indicated a 75 percent completion rate. The completion rate did vary considerably among colleges. The college with the smallest enrollment, the College of Cultural Studies, had the lowest completion rate (64.5%) in regularly scheduled modules. The largest college, the College of Human Learning

and Development, had the highest completion rate (80.1%) in regularly scheduled modules.

Slightly less than two-thirds (63.5%) of the enrolled credit hours in self-instructional modules had been completed when the data for this study was completed. Completion rates in SIMs ranged from a low of 47.7 percent in Business and Public Service to a high of 73.2 percent in Human Learning and Development. The completion rate in SIMs for all colleges is 9.7 percent below that of regularly scheduled modules. This appears to be a significant difference and should be further investigated. In particular, one college (BPS) has a completion rate of 47.7 percent and offers the greatest number of SIMs. This college should access this figure and determine a strategy for dealing with this figure. If less than 50 percent of students enrolled in a class can be expected to complete the class, it seems that the half that does not complete should be channeled into other types of modules.

In general, a student registering for credit in independent study has about a 50:50 chance of receiving the credit. Only slightly more than half (54.8%) of the students enrolled for independent study in 1975 completed their work and received credit by the time of this study. Completion rates in independent study in the colleges ranged from a low of 39.5 percent in Environmental and Applied Sciences to a high of 62.3 percent in Human Learning and Development. Since approximately 12 percent of the total credits in 1975 were independent study, attention should be focused on encouraging students to seriously pursue their independent study projects. The questions that have not yet been answered at GSU are: (1) Is the typical GSU student willing and able to pursue subject matter independently, (2) will this effort result

in significant educational growth on the part of the student, and (3) does the amount or kind of counseling offered during independent study differ among colleges?

The completion rates in other types of modules, taken as a group, seem to be about where one would expect them to be (nearly 70%).

After reviewing statistics on completion rates for regularly scheduled modules, self-instructional modules, and independent study it appears that there is too wide a divergence in the completion rate among these instructional modes. There are many possible explanations but no solid information to say exactly why these differences occur. However, it seems reasonable to assume that not all students can do equally well in these three types of instructional modes. If the institution can identify which type of instructional mode in which students individually perform best, then students can be advised more effectively. The incompletion of modules costs the student and the university both financially and attitudinally. Sensitivity to the individual nature of incoming skills of each student seems to be a needed element to channel students into productive degree tracks.

Enrolling students in modules in which their probability of success is highest will obviously improve the completion rate in modules. Of course, a high completion rate by itself says nothing, but, if the student is more successful and at the same time achieves required competencies, then, the student and the university have gained from an educational experience.